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ABSTRACT

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education prepared recommendations on vocational education's role in dropout prevention in Kentucky. Eight recommendations were developed as follows: (1) education decision-makers should take appropriate steps to revitalize and implement the concepts of a practical arts exploration program at the seventh- to ninth-grade level; (2) vocational education teachers and equipment should be involved in the teaching of keyboarding skills to seventh- to ninth-grade students as part of the universal use of computers; (3) vocational education should be made accessible to more students below the 11th grade; (4) active recruitment of youth who have been out of school for a minimum of 1 year should be instituted to enroll dropouts into vocational education programs that allow for slower paced, competency-based programs and lead to a regular high school diploma; (5) a curriculum committee should be established to develop strategies for a vocational high school diploma, explore and recommend ways to integrate successful vocational education practices into the general education curriculum, review and modify vocational education curricula so that high school basic skills credit may be given, and identify and remove unnecessary curriculum-imposed barriers to student opportunities for vocational education enrollment; (6) a joint venture to develop programs using vocational education methods for meeting special needs of children should be explored and rehabilitation provided; (7) additional vocational education counselors should be hired; and (8) the feasibility of a summer school program using vocational education facilities should be investigated. (CML)

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KENTUCKY

THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN DROPOUT PREVENTION

Governor's Council on Vocational Education

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THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN DROPOUT PREVENTION

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KENTUCKY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S ROLE IN DROPOUT PREVENTION

Executive Summary

The National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education issued a recent position statement entitled "Dropout, Education's National Emergency." The Kentucky Governor's Council on Vocational Education fully agrees with the National Association's position that dropping out of high school is indeed an educational emergency that must have immediate national attention. The Kentucky Council recognizes that Kentucky's share of the problem is extensive and very serious. Just how serious in comparison to other states is difficult to answer. Each state has its own unique way of calculating dropout rates and numbers. A 1986 report of the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Educational Statistics (CES) entitled "The Condition of Education" states that "even the two major Federal producers of education data, the Bureau of the Census and the Center for Statistics in the U. S. Department of Education, collect data related to dropouts in quite different ways." The same report points out that discrepancies in reported dropout rates nationally result from the fact that the data often used does not directly pertain to dropouts but to other related concepts.

No matter how Kentucky compares nationally, there is enough evidence available to reveal that dropping out is a serious Kentucky problem. Consider the following:

1. Kentucky ranks 50th among all states in high school graduates; only 53.1% of adults 25 years of age and older are high school graduates. (1980, U. S. Census Bureau)

2. Kentucky's 1987 high school graduation class included only 65.4% of those who entered the ninth grade in 1983. The national average is just under 75%.

3. Kentucky public schools reported over 11,000 dropouts in 1987. This figure did not include students who did not return to school after the summer vacation.

Kentucky does have a serious dropout problem. The Kentucky Council believes that every Kentucky educational strategy must be examined for utilization to the fullest extent to address the problem. <u>It is the purpose of this paper to address Kentucky vocational education's role in preventing dropping out</u>.

The Kentucky Governor's Council on Vocational Education feels a responsibility to speak out on this issue. While we recognize that vocational education must not be viewed as a panacea, the total answer to the dropout problem as some educators looking for a dumping ground might

contend, vocational education does have much to contribute to better meeting the needs of many students who do not readily respond to the type of educational experience they are receiving and who, as a result, drop out.

Methodology

There are many excellent, current statements relating to dropout prevention and vocational education that have utilized excellent research, study groups, and writers. These available documents very adequately define the issues. Rather than to rewrite or rehash this body of information or initiate new research, the Kentucky Council is utilizing selected portions of the works that have been previously prepared to provide a background for our recommendations. The recommendations, which may or may not have some universal usefulness, will be aimed specifically at the Kentucky situation.

Summary of Recommendations

1. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that the Kentucky education decision-makers; i.e., the Governor, the General Assembly, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education, and the State Board for Vocational-Technical, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, take appropriate steps to revitalize and implement the concepts of a practical arts exploration program at the 7th - 9th grade level.

2. Because of the universal use of computers, and because a positive and successful educational experience builds self esteem and the desire to stay in school, vocational education teachers and equipment should be utilized for the teaching of keyboard skills to 7th to 9th grade students as a part of exploration. The positive experience will enhance the image of vocational education, provide encouragement to young people to continue their education, and provide a vital skill.

3. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that vocational education be made accessible to more students below the eleventh grade.

4. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that a program of active recruitment of youth who have been out of school for a minimum of one year be instituted to enroll dropouts into vocational education programs that allow for slower paced, competency-based programs and lead to a regular high school diploma.

5. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education believes that many students who are disaffected with regular education strategies could be motivated by alternative hands-on vocational education curricula where learning takes place as a result of practical applications of basic knowledge and, thus, recommends establishment of a curriculum committee consisting of representatives of the Office of Instruction and the Office of Vocational Education to:

   a. develop strategies for a vocational high school diploma having all the rigors of a "regular" diploma but with a modified instructional process;

   b. explore and recommend ways to integrate successful vocational education practices into the general education curriculum;

   c. review and modify, if necessary, vocational education curricula in order that high school basic skills credit may be given; and

   d. identify and remove unnecessary curriculum imposed barriers to student opportunities for vocational education enrollment.

   The Council is aware of some efforts now underway to address the issues identified in this recommendation. The recommendation is offered to support current efforts and to encourage increased activity.

6. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that the offices of Education for Exceptional Children, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Vocational Education explore a joint venture to develop programs utilizing vocational education methods for meeting special needs of special classifications.

7. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends additional staffing of vocational education counselors to examine and understand learning styles and preferences of at-risk students and to assist the at-risk students to remain in school and pursue alternative vocational education programs to acquire basic education and employability skills.

8. The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Board for Vocational-Technical, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services explore the feasibility of a summer school program utilizing vocational education facilities for a competency-based and learner-paced basic skills instructional strategy for individuals who have failed one or more regular basic education subjects.

Why Is A High School Education Important?

1. Basic Education Necessary For A Democratic Society

A 1985 report to the Kentucky superintendent of public instruction by the Kentucky Dropout Prevention Advisory Commission begins by stating:

"The success of any democracy is dependent upon an educated citizenry. In the beginning of the American dream, Thomas Jefferson observed:

> I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with the wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education.

"That has never ceased to be an American educational goal. Yet in 1963, in the State of the Union address, President John F. Kennedy found it necessary to address the magnitude of the undereducated and uneducated citizens as evidenced by the national dropout problem. He declared:

> Never before have there been so many students who find the educational process wanting and abandon it; never before has the scholastic experience seemed so remote from what youngsters find real; never before has it been felt to be so hollow, so separated from the world, so irrelevant to the issues that engage us most intensely; never before have so many found it so unchallenging to the imagination, so barren, so just plain boring . . .
>
> The future of any country which is dependent on the will and wisdom of its citizens is damaged whenever any of its children are not educated to the fullest extent of their capacity . . .
>
> This is a waste we cannot afford."[1]

2. Basic Education Affects Economic Growth

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education in a research and policy paper entitled "Vocational Education and its Role in Dropout Prevention" points out the negative consequences of dropping out for our youth and American society:

"As our population ages, our youth population becomes smaller and increasingly minority, and the skill requirements for participation in the work force increase, the negative consequences associated with a continuing dropout rate of just under 30 percent (800,000-1,000,000 youth per year) will become more critical, both for those individuals who drop out and for society as a whole. The likelihood of future dropouts having

a negative employment experience, such as increased unemployment, decreased earnings, and fewer promotions, will be even greater than it is today. At the same time, society is likely to suffer reduced tax revenues and possibly increased welfare and prison costs if young people continue to drop out of school.

"Recent evidence suggests that the failure of many students to complete high school can have far-reaching economic implications. For example, McDill, Natriello, and Pallas (1985) note that a 'task force of the New York Senate attributed the decline in New York City's economy in part to high dropout rates' (p. 6), which were reported to be approximately 38.4 percent (Rhoter 1985). Likewise Hess and Lauber (1985) contend that neglect of the dropout problem in Chicago (with a reported dropout rate of 43 percent) will cost the city's taxpayers $12.49 for every $1.00 of additional resources needed to address the problem. Furthermore, they estimate that on a per-dropout basis --

- $25,550 is lost in tax revenues due to reduced lifetime earnings associated with residents' inadequate education.
- $3,950 will need to be expended for welfare and income maintenance.
- $5,750 will be the cost associated with crime and related expenditures.

"Thus they estimate the social costs of Chicago's dropout problem for each school class cohort (e.g., the class of 1982) to be approximately $451 million.

"The projected costs of the dropout problem at the national level are also quite staggering. Levine (1972) projected $71 billion of lost tax revenues, $3 billion in increased welfare and unemployment costs, and $3 billion in crime-related costs in 1969 that could be associated with 25- to 34-year-old males who had not completed high school. In a more recent study, Catterall (1985) estimates those countrywide costs to be between $26,000-$200,000 per dropout and $20 billion-$200 billion for each school class, depending on assumptions made regarding future earning and loss projections."[2]

A 1985 Stanford Education Policy Institute report entitled "On the Social Costs of Dropping Out of School" discussed the impact of school dropouts on the nation's economy. At current dropout rates, the high school class of 1981 dropouts represent the following earning losses:

	Dropouts	Individual Lost Earnings	Total Lost Earnings
Males	513,000	$266,000	$136.5 billion
Females	460,000	199,000	91.5 billion
Total			$228.0 billion
Approximate Loss of Tax Revenue -- $68.4 billion			

3. Dropping Out Reduces Individual Income

Aaron M. Pallas, in a 1987 issues paper for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, lists these consequences of dropping out:

> Dropouts have more difficulty in finding and holding jobs. The estimated unemployment rate for dropouts shortly after they leave school is more than twice that of high school graduates of the same age.
>
> Those who do not finish high school earn less money usually than high school graduates. In 1985, among year-round full-time workers 25 years old and older, the typical high school graduate earned over $4,000 per year more than a comparable worker with 9 to 11 years of schooling.
>
> The estimated lifetime earnings of high school graduates who do not attend college are approximately $200,000 higher than the earnings of those who do not complete high school.

4. Dropping Out Results In Numerous Additional Negative Consequences Relating To Quality Of Life

There are nonmonetary consequences of dropping out as well. While still in school, dropouts score considerably lower than stay-ins on standardized tests of cognitive performance (Pallas, 1984). There is now evidence that dropping out is associated with a further widening of the gap in achievement between dropouts and stay-ins.

Students who drop out show less cognitive growth than students who persist to graduation.

A battery of cognitive tests was administered to "High School and Beyond" sophomores in the spring of 1980 and again, two years later, when some had dropped out and the stay-ins were about to graduate from high school. Alexander, Natriello, and Pallas (1985) showed that, all else

being equal, the students who had stayed in school improved their test performance during the two-year period more than students who had dropped out. These tests were not closely linked to a specific high school curriculum but tapped more general knowledge.

Other nonmonetary consequences of dropping out include poorer health, decreased political participation, and lessened social mobility. However, there are no recent and reliable estimates of these social costs of dropping out (Lyke, 1986).[3]

Who Are The Dropouts?

1. General Characteristics

J. M. Weber describes three general characteristics of dropouts:

"Although researchers, educators, and policymakers have not agreed on a definition for dropouts, most will agree on what the general profile for such students looks like. A recent synthesis of the literature (Weber and Silvani-Lacey, 1983) suggests that dropouts can often be characterized by the following:

- Cognitive characteristics -- poor basic skills (e.g., reading and computation skills), as shown in test scores well below average for their expected grade levels; repeated grade levels; poor academic performance; and low scores on intelligence tests (mean = I.Q. of 90).

- Affective characteristics -- appear to lack interest in school and schoolwork; feel alienated from the school environment, teachers, and their peers; feel teachers show little interest, caring, respect, or acceptance; have a low self-concept and exhibit characteristics of social immaturity; tend to be either hostile and unruly or passive and apathetic.

- Other characteristics -- are older than their classmates; are absent frequently and frequently tardy; are often from low socioeconomic family backgrounds in which one or both parents did not complete high school; are from weak or broken homes; are often members of minority groups; receive little family encouragement and psychological support to stay in school; have had at least one child.

"Though not all students who exhibit these characteristics actually drop out, most dropouts do exhibit some combination of these features."[4]

2. Some Specific At-Risk Indicators

In a 1987 publication entitled Dealing with Dropouts, The Urban Superintendents' Call to Action, the following answer is given to the question, "At-risk students -- Who are they?":

"Poor academic performance is the single best predictor of who drops out. D and F students are more apt to leave than those earning A's or B's. Students who have repeated a grade stand a far greater chance of leaving school than those who proceed from grade to grade on schedule. Teens in the vocational and general tracks are more inclined to drop out than those in the academic track. Teens who hold time-consuming jobs are more likely to drop out than those who work fewer hours or not at all.

"Misbehavior while in school can signal trouble. Students who have been suspended, are chronically truant, or have been in conflict with the law have a higher-than-average chance of dropping out."

The research staff at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (1985) identified the following factors that place children at risk of school and life failure:

a. chronic school truancy

b. lack of one or more years in age or grade level in basic skills/academic achievement

c. disruptive school behavior

d. physical and/or sexual abuse/neglect

e. low parental expectations for success

f. parents who place little value on education

g. family trauma, such as divorce, separation, death, or unemployment

h. cultural diversity (language, customs, or educational expectations)

i. ethnic, economic, or cultural disadvantage

j. school-age parenting as a mother or father

k. adjudicated delinquent

l. family history of dropping out of school

m. school suspensions

n. personal and/or family drug/alcohol abuse.

3. Demographics Provide Clues For At-Risk

Demographics also provide clues to who will leave school. Males drop out more than females. Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians are more apt to drop out than whites or Asian Americans. Adolescents whose parents lack a high school diploma are at greater risk than those from better educated families. Urban students are more apt to drop out than rural or suburban students. Teens from homes where activities are not monitored and with fewer study aids and opportunities for nonschool learning are less apt to graduate. Students from one-parent homes drop out more often than those with both parents present. Students are more apt to drop out if they lack consistent support and encouragement from family and community members who share common values and standards. Teenage mothers (and fathers) leave school far more often than adolescents without children.

But poverty is the overwhelming demographic predictor of who will drop out; students from the bottom third in family income stand a far greater chance of leaving school than teens from middle class or affluent families. And when socioeconomic factors are controlled, the differences across racial, ethnic, geographic, and other demographic lines blur. Manford Byrd, Jr., general superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, observes, "If you're really talking about what would reduce the dropout rate the most, it would be getting the daddies of our kids a job."[5]

4. Demographics Profile Future Youth And At-Risk Factors

Education Week (May 14, 1986) published an extensive demographic study profiling the children who entered kindergarten in Fall, 1986. The study projected that of the 3.6 million children entering kindergarten:

a. one of four will be from families who live in poverty

b. 14% will be the children of teen parents

c. 15% will be physically or mentally handicapped

d. 15% will be immigrants who speak a language other than English

e. 14% will be children of unmarried parents

f. 40% will live in broken homes before they reach eighteen

g. 10% will have poorly educated, even illiterate, parents

h. 25-35% will be latchkey children

i. 25% will not finish school.

Why Do Youth Drop Out?

1. No Single Cause; Rather Networks Of Multiple Causes

Profiles of dropouts do not pinpoint a single cause for dropping out. Rather, they indicate that causation is best described as resulting from networks of multiple causes. There may be an exception for girls in that a single cause may exist because of becoming pregnant while still pursuing a high school diploma. Pallas provides a general discussion of the reasons for dropping out:

"There is no one reason why students drop out of school. But the reasons for, and factors associated with, dropping out can be grouped into a few basic categories: academic performance, social adjustment, and early transition into adulthood (Pallas, 1984). The most current data on reasons for dropping out are from the 'High School and Beyond' study.

a. Academic Performance

Students' marks in school and, to a lesser extent, performance on standardized tests are salient indicators of academic success or failure. Students who experience failure in school are more likely to drop out of the system.

* Poor academic performance is the best predictor of who drops out of school.

* Students with a "D" average are five times more likely to drop out than students with a "B" average (U. S. Department of Education, 1983).

b. Social Adjustment

Students experiencing difficulty negotiating the personal and social adjustments of adolescence are more likely to drop out of school.

* Students who are rebellious, delinquent or chronically truant drop out of school at higher rates than those who are not.

Truancy and getting in trouble in school frequently foreshadow dropping out of school. Among high school sophomores, chronic truants are 40 percent more likely to drop out of high school than regularly attending students, everything else being equal, and delinquent youth are 25 percent more likely to drop out than are comparable nondelinquent youngsters (Pallas, 1984).

c. Early Transition into Adulthood

Adolescents who assume adult responsibilities at an early age may find it difficult to cope with both school and adulthood.

Teenagers assuming adult family and work roles are more likely to drop out of school than youngsters who postpone those roles.

Adult family roles. Substantial numbers of young women claim pregnancy or marriage as reasons for dropping out of school.

* Among young women, only poor academic performance rivals the importance of adult family roles as a reason for dropping out of high school (U. S. Department of Education, 1983).

Among female dropouts from the sophomore class of 1980, 31 percent claimed they dropped out because they married or planned to marry, while 23 percent gave pregnancy as a reason for dropping out (students could give more than one reason).

d. Work Considerations

Adult work roles. Many dropouts report that they left high school to go to work (U. S. Department of Education, 1983; Rumberger, 1983). Dropouts report leaving both because they had to support a family and because they were offered jobs and chose to work (U. S. Department of Education, 1983).

* Working at a regular job while in high school increases by more than one-third the changes that a youth will drop out compared to youngsters who are not as involved in work (Pallas, 1984).

* High school students who work over 20 hours per week are more likely to drop out than those who do not work at all (D'Amico, 1984).

"Working more than 20 hours per week may contribute to an increased likelihood of dropping out because of the drain on time and energy available for schoolwork. Alternatively, working may teach youngsters the importance of persistence and dependability, traits critical for successful schooling as well. This may account for the fact that those who work less than 20 hours per week are less likely to leave school than those who work more hours or do not work at all (D'Amico, 1984)."[6]

2. Vocational Education Research Agrees That Dropping Out Is Rarely Due To A Single Factor

James Weber of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education agrees that there is no single cause and outlines reasons for leaving as given by students:

"For most youth, the decision to drop out of high school is rarely due to a single factor and does not 'just happen.' By the time a potential dropout enters high school, many predictive signs are already present and the decision to leave school results from the interaction of a number of factors. Many of the factors frequently

mentioned by dropouts as reasons for leaving school are summarized in table 1. (The information in that table is based upon the sophomore cohort of the "High School and Beyond" database, a nationally representative sample of approximately 27,000 students, including over 2,000 dropouts, as well as the results of a number of other follow-up studies of dropouts conducted by various state and local education agencies.)"[7]

TABLE 1

Source: The percentages shown are based upon results reported by Peng and Takai (1983)

Categories	Males	Females
School Experience	-- Poor performance, e.g., basic skills achievement (36%)	-- Did not like school (31%)
	-- Did not like school (35%)	-- Poor performance, e.g., grades, basic skills, achievement (30%)
	-- Couldn't get along with teachers (31%)	-- Couldn't get along with teachers (10%)
	-- Expelled or suspended (13%)	
Conditions of Student's Family	-- Had to support family (14%)	-- Marriage (31%)
		-- Pregnancy (23%)
Other Reasons	-- Offered a job and chose to work (27%)	-- Offered a job and chose to work (11%)

Vocational Education Seeking Solutions Calls For Examination Of Potential For Change And New Initiatives

The Kentucky Governor's Council feels that available research and other practical information indicate potential for vocational education to contribute significantly to dropout reduction. The following are some areas that should be considered for positive change and new initiatives:

Finding #1:

There is a need for earlier introduction of vocational education and earlier entrance potential for vocational education classroom/ laboratory/shop work.

A 1983 paper of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education reported the following:

> All else being equal, the more vocational education students had taken, the less likely they were to drop out of school. This relationship was statistically significant in grades ten and twelve and negative but not significant for grade eleven. Although the relationship was significant for grades ten and twelve, the size of the effect was small. In both grades ten and twelve, obtaining one vocational credit was associated with about a tenth of a percent reduction in the probability of dropping out. Several hypotheses were explored to examine the meaning of these results. One possible scenario concerned the age of the students and the availability of vocational education. Ninth grade vocational education may have helped retain students in the tenth grade because it offered them an alternative to an irrelevant academic curriculum, and the majority of the students were young and not yet feeling financial pressure. Tenth grade vocational education may not have had this strong retentive effect because the majority of the individuals had reached the legal age for leaving school and were starting to feel pressure to work and make money. In addition, most vocational education programs do not become available to students until the eleventh and twelfth grades. It could have been that the limited vocational offerings available in the tenth grade were not a strong enough influence to overcome the legal age and financial pressures felt at that time. Eleventh grade vocational education may have had a significant retentive effect for grade twelve because of the greater variety of vocational offerings that were available in grade eleven.[8]

The same report under the topic "Implications" states:

> One possible intervention strategy would be to increase the availability of vocational education below the eleventh grade.[9]

RECOMMENDATION #1:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that the Kentucky education decision-makers; i.e., the Governor, the General Assembly, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education, and the State Board for Vocational-Technical, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, take appropriate steps to revitalize and implement the concepts of a practical arts exploration program at the 7th - 9th grade level.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

Because of the universal use of computers, and because a positive and successful educational experience builds self-esteem and the desire to stay in school, vocational education teachers and equipment should be utilized for the teaching of keyboard skills to 7th to 9th grade students as a part of exploration. The positive experience will enhance the image of vocational education, provide encouragement to young people to continue their education, and provide a vital skill.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that vocational education be made accessible to more students below the eleventh grade.

Finding #2:

There is a need to maximize utilization of vocational education as a "drop back in" option.

The Center for Educational Statistics' 1986 issues paper concerning dropout points out:

a. An estimated 40 percent of the students who drop out of high school subsequently return to the educational system.

b. An estimated 30 percent of the students who drop out of school eventually receive a high school diploma or an alternative credential.

c. National data show that the proportion of individuals who have not completed high school declines considerably with age. The non-completion rate for 31- to 34-year-olds is approximately half that of 18- to 19-year-olds.

d. The decrease in the non-completion rate with age is due to the graduation of some who were still in school at age 18-19 as well as the return to school and completion by others who were out of school as 18- and 19-year-olds.

e. Those who are more likely to return and complete include whites, those with higher test scores prior to dropping out, and those from families with a higher socioeconomic status.

f. Alternatives to regular day school programs have become more prevalent in the past twenty years, and many people are using these routes to acquire high school credentials.

g. Little is known about the social, economic, and educational consequences of obtaining high school graduation credentials outside of regular day school programs.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that a program of active recruitment of youth who have been out of school for a minimum of one year be instituted to enroll dropouts into vocational education programs that allow for slower paced, competency-based programs and lead to a regular high school diploma.

Finding #3:

There is a need to consider vocational education as an alternative method for achieving basic education.

Finding #4:

There is a need to promote successful vocational education practices, such as competency-based and learner-paced education, as productive educational efforts to meet special needs of at-risk students.

Finding #5:

There is a need to increase the role of vocational education in high school work/study programs.

Finding #6:

There is a need to consider academic requirements as they affect vocational education and dropping out.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education believes that many students who are disaffected with regular education strategies could be motivated by alternative hands-on vocational education curricula where learning takes place as a result of practical applications of basic knowledge and, thus, recommends establishment of a curriculum committee consisting of representatives of the Office of Instruction and the Office of Vocational Education to:

a. develop strategies for a vocational high school diploma having all the rigors of a "regular" diploma but with a modified instructional process;

b. explore and recommend ways to integrate successful vocational education practices into the general education curriculum;

c. review and modify, if necessary, vocational education curricula in order that high school basic skills credit may be given; and

d. identify and remove unnecessary curriculum imposed barriers to student opportunities for vocational education enrollment.

The Council is aware of some efforts now underway to address the issues identified in this recommendation. The recommendation is offered to support current efforts and to encourage increased activity.

Finding #7:

Vocational education holds potential as a deterrent to dropping out by youth in special needs classifications; and, thus, there is a need to examine vocational education's role in preventing dropping out by youth in special classifications.

RECOMMENDATION #6:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that the offices of Education for Exceptional Children, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Vocational Education explore a joint venture to develop programs utilizing vocational education methods for meeting special needs of special classifications.

Finding #8:

There is a need for additional vocational education counselors and a need to define their role in dropout prevention.

RECOMMENDATION #7:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends additional staffing of vocational education counselors to examine and understand learning styles and preferences of at-risk students and to assist the at-risk students to remain in school and pursue alternative vocational education programs to acquire basic education and employability skills.

Finding #9:

There is a need to add summer programs at vocational schools as a student retention effort.

RECOMMENDATION #8:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education recommends that the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Board for Vocational-Technical, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services explore the feasibility of a summer school program utilizing vocational education facilities for a competency-based and learner-paced basic skills instructional strategy for individuals who have failed one or more regular basic education subjects.

IMPLICATIONS:

The Governor's Council on Vocational Education believes that this paper has identified some important implications for educational system review when addressing the dropout issue. These implications include:

a. A key to effective dropout prevention programs may be the early identification of potential dropouts so that services can be provided to at-risk students prior to high school.

b. Re-entry holds potential for substantially reducing the number of individuals without high school credentials. Efforts should be increased to bring young people back into an educational system which would provide a viable and relevant alternative to the educational experience that failed to adequately motivate them to stay in school.

c. More flexible high school programs, such as those for expectant mothers and parents of young children, that allow individuals to stay in school while meeting family or job responsibilities should be developed.

d. It is important to evaluate the existing and proposed alternatives for cost effectiveness and educational benefits to recipients.

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